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ABSTRACT

The growing emphasis on planning and evaluation in educational institutions has resulted in rapid implementation of various strategies. Participant-consultant observations were used to focus on the problems of the implementation. Organizational conflicts were identified, and coping strategies were developed by an external agent. Several organizational settings, local school district evaluations, administrative team planning development, and a process evaluation in a flexible modular high school provided the experience base. Common conflict areas, effective coping strategies, and implications for innovators are discussed. (Author)

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MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT RESULTING FROM ADOPTION OF NEW PLANNING - EVALUATION STRATEGIES

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MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT RESULTING FROM ADOPTION OF NEW PLANNING - EVALUATION STRATEGIES*

The problem of implementation - putting something into effect by means of a definite plan - is a recurrent theme in the educational community. The development of new knowledge, techniques, and materials for the educational community doesn't guarantee the use of these tools: Development is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for implementation.

How can we get theory into practice, scientific knowledge utilized, and successful innovations disseminated?

These recurring questions are not unique to the educational community. The agricultural extension agent has been struggling with them for years.

Environmental pressures have placed a heavy emphasis on the development of planning and evaluation strategies for school systems. The demands for accountability by tax payers, federal funding agencies, and State Boards of Education are examples of rationalistic trends of a technological-bureaucratic society.

The developing body of planning-evaluation literature has not addressed the problem of implementation. The literature has focused on conceptual models (C.I.P.P. - I.P.O. - Systems Analysis) for the phenomena of interest, procedural models of the planning-evaluation process (Task Analysis - Problem Solving Loops), and alternative techniques available to the planner-evaluator (PERT - P.P.B.S. - Delphi).

Consideration of the processes by which these models are installed and used in school settings are lacking. Those who consult regarding planning-

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*Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association's Annual Meeting - New Orleans, 1973.

evaluation implementation problems have several acronyms which serve as guide posts, such as SLAP (Stay Loose-Act Pensive) or PALS (Play Along-Look Sympathetic). With such vague guideposts the problem remains - what are the dynamics of the planning-evaluation implementation process?

Lacking a validated theory to understand the phenomena and guide action, field work, seeking encounters with the phenomena, was conducted in anticipation of insights and generalizations concerning the implementation process.

The findings from these encounters provides the central theme of this paper: Management of organizational conflict is crucial to the implementation of new planning-evaluation strategies. Without the effective management of organizational tensions produced by new strategies, implementation is unlikely.

I The Preliminary Encounters

During the last two years many opportunities for implementing planning-evaluation programs in educational settings became available. Being associated with a professional school, within a department with a strong tradition for field related services maximized the availability of opportunities. Generally, opportunities became available when a person sent a letter, telephoned, or appeared at the office door. The initial contact usually resulted in a vague expression of concern about a problem. The client would grope for terms to express his feelings and had difficulty in relating his concerns. Sometimes the initial contact was problem specific with the client presenting the type of service desired. The number of opportunities far exceeded the limits of resources, and consequently a screening mechanism for reducing opportunities was employed.

The nature of the problem, whether it fell within my array of competencies, and the authenticity of the client were crucial criteria employed during the screening process.

During the past two years, six opportunities survived this initial screening and efforts to develop symbiotic relationships followed, of which only four were successful. The four were reduced to three when one of the relationships was subsequently severed. It is interesting to note that the efforts to establish symbiotic (linking) relationships required a heavy expenditure of time (three attempts consumed approximately twenty (20) man days) and often resulted in failure. Why? They failed because of the level of organizational conflict. Two of the failures occurred very early in the implementation process.

The first failure occurred when the formal leader (President of a Community College) rejected the need for a clarification process to identify and establish the responsibilities of his subordinates before developing a Management by Objectives system. In addition, the formal leader insisted on installation of the MBO system within a four-month period. Given these conditions, the relationship was terminated.

The second failure occurred when the formal leader (Elementary School Principal) presented his staff with an evaluation proposal (mandated by state funding rules) for an existing compensatory education program. A faction of the teachers revolted - "We don't need that! What we're doing IS effective!" They were the real power in the school system, and, therefore, the formal leader graciously acquiesced. A week after this confrontation the relationship was terminated: The principal realized the consequences of implementing the proposal.

The third failure occurred quite late in the implementation process. During a seven-month period, a process and product evaluation of a compensatory edu-

cation program was conducted in a local school district. The implementation of the evaluation had passed through all the phases and conflict periods which will be enumerated later. The evaluation was to continue for a three-year period, but during the eighth month of the project a community power struggle occurred. Since the school system was the only institution present in the community the focus of the power struggle became the school board, and the issue was the dismissal of the superintendant of schools. The superintendant was canned, and the renewal of the contract for the evaluation project wasn't considered by the new school board. Thus, these three opportunities evaporated due to organizational conflicts -, one by a power holder upset with the consequences of management by objectives planning requirements; the second by a power group upset with the consequences of implementing a process and product evaluation; and the third by the consumption of a power group's energies with other conflicts.

The three opportunities which remained were: (1) An evaluation of a Compensatory Education program in a local school district; (2) Planning-Development seminars with sixteen administrative teams of local school districts; and (3) a process evaluation of a Flexible Modular High School in an urban setting. These opportunities then became the focus of inquiry and activities.

II Methods

Participant-consultant relationships were established within three organizational settings: (1) a local school district; (2) administrative teams of local school systems; and (3) a Flexible Modular High School.

A) The Linking Role

The assumption of a linking role on the part of the investigator seemed

imperative for development and subsequent maintainence of productive relationships. The concept of "the knowledge gap" (Havelock, 1971) has been depicted as the bifurcation of two social systems - research and practice systems (see Figure I).

FILLING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP

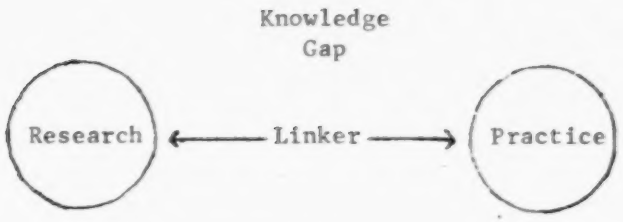

Figure I

The role of linker is essentially one of providing a systems interface and facilitating the flow of information, resources, and dialogue between the systems. The existence of the knowledge gap and the subsequent need for linkage suggests that a system is ". . . . identified by its own set of rules, values, languages, and communication patterns. Those norms which are shared within each system also define their separateness from each other. There is an inadequacy of shared values, common perceptions, and inter-system communication patterns." Havelock, pg. 7-1)

An awareness of the knowledge gap concept and equal professional experience in both systems provided an estimate of potential barriers inhibiting

development of linking relationships. Figure 2 presents a revised depiction of the knowledge gap with a tentative listing of barriers.

REVISED KNOWLEDGE GAP DEPICTION AND SOURCES OF CONFLICT

	University Knowledge Expertise	Field Services Applications Task Project	Schools Practice Problems
BARRIER	GIVENS →	NEED FOR ←	GIVENS
Social Status	Professor ie High Status Ph.D	Implementer-Engineer Equal Status	Practitioner ie Service Status Mr.
Motivational Drive	Theory Oriented Academic Freedom	Helping Relationship Task Accomplishment	Survival Oriented Production Pursuits
Territorial Home	Campus Ivory Tower	Neutral Social Territory	My Turf Trenches
Language Differences	Unique Coding Scheme ie a) Exigency b) CRT c) Theory as Truth	Common Coding Scheme ie a) Problem b) Diagnostic c) A way of looking at it	Unique Coding Scheme ie a) Problem b) Test c) Theory as unrealistic speculation
Social Referents	Unique ie A.E.R.A. Scientific Assoc.	Common ie Educators The student	Unique ie Local Assoc. AASA
Time Committments	Permanent ie Tenure	Temporal ie Contract	Permanent ie Tenure/or/Contract Staff Administ.
Knowledge Orientation	Disciplines as the Foundation of Knowledge	Problem Resolution	Experience As the Foundation of Knowledge
Task Constraints	Limited - Time Allocated by choice	Specified - Establish activities within time constraints	Heavy - Demands constrain choice and time

FIGURE 2

The awareness of potential sources of conflict in assuming a linking role conditioned the actions of the investigator. For example, the use of language and the nature of dialogue with practitioners was consciously selected to minimize status and knowledge differences. Titles were avoided and first name, informal modes of conversation were adopted. Dialogue focusing on common experiences (family, sports, etc.) was maximized. Neutral social territories were selected for inter-

actions when possible, otherwise the practitioner's turf prevailed. The essential problem was the minimization of social distance and status differentials: They are sources of conflicts which the linking agent must manage if he wishes to develop helping relationships.

Havelock (1971) has identified two endemic problems in linking roles: Specifically-marginality and overload. Marginality refers to the in-betweenness of the role: the problem of being viewed on the fringe or not part of the organizations being served.

For the three projects marginality problems were expected to be minimal. The University and its colleges has a strong tradition of field service (the original land grant college), and over the years has acquired a high utility value with practitioners. Second, the idiosyncratic credit developed by other professors from the same department would assist in the acceptance of the investigator. Third, the initial contact for the projects came from the practitioners. Fourth, the projects were accepted only after an initial screening which eliminated opportunities which had seemed artifical. (Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval Types.)

Therefore, other than minimizing social distance and status differentials, no prior plans were developed to cope with the problem of marginality.

Overload - the need for the linker to focus his activities in projects, time-limited and objective-limited sequences-was viewed as a potential source of stress for the linker and the practitioner. Assuming a condition of overload, the potential for rendering a project infeasible due to the complexity and difficulty of its tasks would place the linker in a position of extreme anxiety. The unfulfilled expectations of the practitioner would lead to dissatisfaction, reduction of positive relationships, and, perhaps a feeling of marginality.

In order to prevent this source of conflict from becoming excessive, a plan to conduct the projects within the following framework was adopted:

1. A formal contract would be formulated and signed.
2. The contract would specify:
   a. definite time committments
   b. the nature of the services provided
   c. the cost
3. The specific tasks of the linker would be determined after a clarification phase (Bring the problem(s) into focus) and diagnosis phase (linker awareness of the organizational setting dynamics and problems).

Whereas marginality and overload express undesirable situations, the problems of the linking agent could be conceptualized as credibility and productivity - a desirable state of affairs. The credibility of the linking agent establishes and maintains inter-personal linkage between the bifurcated systems of knowledge and practice. The productivity of the linking agent provides evidence that the linkage has value.

B) The Problem Solving Orientation

The use of a problem solving orientation by the investigator seemed imperative for effective implementation of the projects. The willingness of the practitioner to use the results of project activities would be directly related to the practitioners involvement in defining the problem. This assumption thus requires a collaborative relationship in which the practitioner interacts with the participant-consultant; the practitioner providing the felt needs and the participant-consultant providing the mechanisms to articulate the problem. When problems are clearly stated, a series of activities follow -

ending with problem resolution. Therefore, the determination of project activities would not be determined until after a period of collaborative problem definition.

C) Data Source

Anecdotal accounts of observations for each project were maintained. A second data source was the documents produced for each project. These included interview tapes, diagnostic findings, feedback memorandums, questionnaires, problem inventories, agendas, and evaluation findings. The process of reviewing, reflecting and reducing the observations and documents to manageable level resulted in conceptualization of the process by which planning-evaluation strategies are implemented.

III. The Projects

Each of three projects were conducted within the time period from September 1971 through August 1972, were relatively complex and required a substantial committment of time and human resources. The elements that were common to all the projects were:

A. Emphasis on planning or evaluation

B. A problem-solving format

C. Task oriented relationships

D. An interactive refinement of project tasks over a protracted period of time

E. The linking agent function of the projects

The unique features of the projects were determined by the nature of the problems, the organizational settings, the recipient groups, and the methods employed to accomplish the project task.

In order to provide some understanding of the nature of each project, a brief description follows - focusing on the project's mission and series of activities to fulfill that mission.

A) Administrative Team Project

During the past twelve years the Department of Administration and Higher Education (Michigan State University) has conducted an extern program. The purpose of the extern program is to provide in-service education for practicing administrators. The focus of the program is problems oriented with individual administrators from across the state meeting for a week-end (once a month) in a conservation camp setting.

In evaluating the extern program, we found that many administrators expressed the following concerns:

1. The individual administrator benefitted from the program, but skills and problem solutions acquired during the extern program
2. had little impact on his home school district.
   The non-extern administrators in the school district were not open to alternative problem solution suggestions.
3. The absence of a Team approach to management preclude the development of problem solving behaviors.

The response to these exigencies resulted in the incorporation of an Administrative Team section within the structure of the extern program. The mission of this program was to develop the administrative capacity of a school system by developing the planning capacity of the administrative group.

Activities

Sixteen participating school districts were identified, and the participating administrators assembled at the University for a problem identification-team assessment weekend.

The First Weekend

After a brief presentation on the elements of planning and the characteristics of an effective administrative team, a series of grouping procedures was utilized to stimulate discussion and identification of planning and administrative problems.

Discussion groups were formulated in three ways. The first grouping was random assignment across all administrative teams. The second assigned administrators to four types of discussion groups: central office, secondary, middle school, and elementary - depending on the administrator's primary function in the school district. The final grouping was by teams. The discussion groups focused on the planning and administrative problems of the administrators.

These activities resulted in three products: (1) a listing of problem statements by individual administrators, (2) an assessment of the dynamics of each administrative team, and (3) a priority ranking of problem areas.

All information collected from individuals were subject to the following rules:

1. All information collected would be fed back at the next session to ALL the administrative teams.
2. The anonymity of individual responses and school system was GUARANTEED.

The Second and Subsequent Weekends

During the second weekend, the results of the compilations were fed back to the administrative teams. The level of tension during that weekend was very high. The administrators were confronted with their own statements (anonymous), and the theme of the second weekend was: If these statements are in fact true,

what should be done to resolve the problems identified?

A summary of problem areas across teams indicated that the absence of clearly understood team objectives was the first priority problem area (58% of the administrators) with communications and utilization of team member competencies as second priority areas (38% of the administrators).

Subsequent weekends included the following activities:

A. Presentations on:

1. Development of Goals and Objectives
2. Using PERT to manage projects
3. Determining roles and responsibilities of team members
4. Management by objectives
5. Planning facilities development
6. Planning for a millage election

B. Work sessions:

1. Work team sessions on systems problems
2. Matching of two administrative teams with similar problems
3. Matching of administrators with similar functions to resolve common problems

C. Informal gathering and discussion

These activities were determined on an interactive basis. As problems emerged during a session, the subsequent weekends' program of activities were designed to meet these needs.

Site Visitations

A requirement of this program was the establishment of a regular meeting of the administrative team in its own school district. The participant-consultant attended these meetings during the initial phase of the project. This pro-

vided opportunities for diagnosis of the organizational setting - work flow, power relationships, community pressures, etc. - by the participant-consultant. As the team developed the capacity to conduct productive team meetings, the presence of the participant-consultant was withdrawn.

Mid-Stream Correction

Half way through the project an assessment of each team's progress, obstacles preventing its future development, and the focus of future team efforts was conducted. The results of this assessment were fed back to the teams and used to make major adjustments in subsequent weekends. The results indicated a strong desire to spend more time meeting as separate teams. The activities for subsequent weekends were adjusted to provide approximately 85% of the time available for team meetings. The activities of the participant-consultant at this point became one of attending team meetings, providing assistance when requested, and observing the dynamics of the group.

B) Compensatory Education Evaluation Project

The second planning-evaluation project was conducting a process and product evaluation of a mathematics/reading program in a small rural school district. The State of Michigan via its Statewide Assessment Program had determined those school districts with a high proportion of low achieving students in the basic skills. A substantial sum of money ($21 million) from the general state aid fund was allocated for compensatory programs to improve the basic skills of the target population. The rules for funding required a statement of objectives, instructional strategies, measures of effectiveness, community council, and an evaluation. The evaluation section required that a process and product evaluation be conducted. The local administrators were confronted with requirements with which they didn't know how to cope. They contacted the field

service unit within the Department of Administration and Higher Education (Michigan State University). During a two-month period the nature of their problem and the type of help requested was clarified. The clarification activities included site visitations and conferences with the key individuals responsible for administering the program.

A proposal indicating possible evaluation strategies was developed and presented to the key individuals (the Superintendent of School and Building Principals). Agreement was reached and a contract was signed. The contract specified that a process evaluation and product evaluation would be conducted and service functions would be provided (i.e. Development of proposals for the State Education Department, generation of reports for the State Education Department, assistance in selecting and administering achievement tests). The instructional strategy consisted of diagnostic testing, individualized prescription, pre-post criterion referenced assessment provided by a private company in a learning center setting. The company provided all diagnostic instruments, instructional materials, and learning modules. The school selected the learning center directress and para-professionals to coordinate the learning activities.

Activities

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation focused on the implementation of the instructional strategy as planned. This evaluation, therefore, focused on four key elements in the process:

1. The in-service training of the learning center's staffs using the program.
2. The providing of materials and services by the private company.

3. The utilization of the program by learning center staff as planned.

4. The flow of information to the parents and communities.

The methodology employed to collect data consisted of surveys, structured interviews, and observations during site visitations. Findings and discrepancies between the activities and planned program activities were fed back to key individuals for corrective actions.

Product Evaluation

The product evaluation focused on achievement growth in mathematics and reading: The funding rules for continued support required .75 of a month's growth (GSE) per month of program for each child in the program.

Other measures of the product of this program were:

1. Student behavioral change in normal classrooms.

2. Improvement of self concept.

3. Parents' observations of behavioral change and attitudes.

The instruments employed to collect data were standardized tests, questionnaires and instruments developed for this project. Analyses were conducted by the participant-consultant, and the results were fed back to the key individuals.

Service Functions

Due to the size of the school district and the absence of support personnel, several purely service functions were provided: the preparation of data cards for the State Education Department, the revision of funding proposals, and consulting services when faced with compensatory education crises - to name a few of these services.

It is interesting to note that a great deal of goodwill was developed by providing these services. The feeling that help would be available when

needed led to the development of credits (a debt owed) and productive relationships.

C) Process Evaluation Project

During the spring of 1971 the writer worked as a consultant in planning the opening of a Flexible Modular High School in an urban setting. A differentiated staffing pattern was to be used - expanding the normal administrative team of Principal and Assistant Principals to include instructional leaders. The consultantship focused on the development of the expanded management team - clarifying member roles and responsibilities. Consultive help for staff development, program design, and computer scheduling was provided by a private firm.

During the winter of 1972, the writer received a phone call inquiring about the possibility of conducting a process evaluation for the High School during its second operating semester.

The key elements planned for the High School were identified by central office and building personnel:

1. Modular Scheduling (Course Design)
2. Use of the resource centers
3. Adult/student ratio's (Load Factors)
4. Variety of instructional materials
5. Diversity of instructional methods
6. Learning task determining group size
7. Roles of all building personnel
8. In-service training
9. Teacher-counselor role

During a two-month period, a series of discussions with central office and building personnel clarified the specifics of the desired evaluation and

operating procedures to be followed. The magnitude of the evaluation required a team of evaluators in order to complete the project within a five-month period. A contract was negotiated and signed.

Activities

The project was conducted in two stages. The first phase was a clarification process which determined the major questions to be answered for each element. The procedures used to accomplish this phase were:

1. Clarification of the above elements by interviews with building personnel.
2. Report on interview findings to the instructional team (assistant principal for instruction and lead teachers).
3. Determination of acceptable measures for each of the clarified elements.

The second phase was a task activities phase which focused on the collection and analyses of data:

4. Application of the agreed upon measures.
5. Verification of the measures (interviewed building personnel).
6. Report findings to the instructional team (in writing).
7. Repeated the process with changes suggested by the instruction team.

These then were the projects which provided the participant-consultant encounters. Each occurred in a different organizational setting with unique project requirements. All required the implementation of new planning-evaluation strategies within the respective organizational settings.

IV The Implementation Process

Two fields of study have contributed to the writer's understanding of the implementation process: Planning for innovations - change; and Organizational Development (OD).

Models from each of these fields of inquiry were considered as possible heuristic mechanisms for guiding the implementation process of the planning-evaluation projects.

Innovations-Change Model

Havelock (1970, pg.11) indicates that "...the focus of innovation planning has to be the USER, himself: his needs and his problems must be the primary concern of educational reform. Therefore, our orientation is PROBLEM SOLVING BY AND FOR THE USER THROUGH EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES."

Given this orientation a linking agent (participant-consultant) acts as a process helper facilitating innovation and change by enabling the user (client-practitioner) to loop through a problem solving sequence.

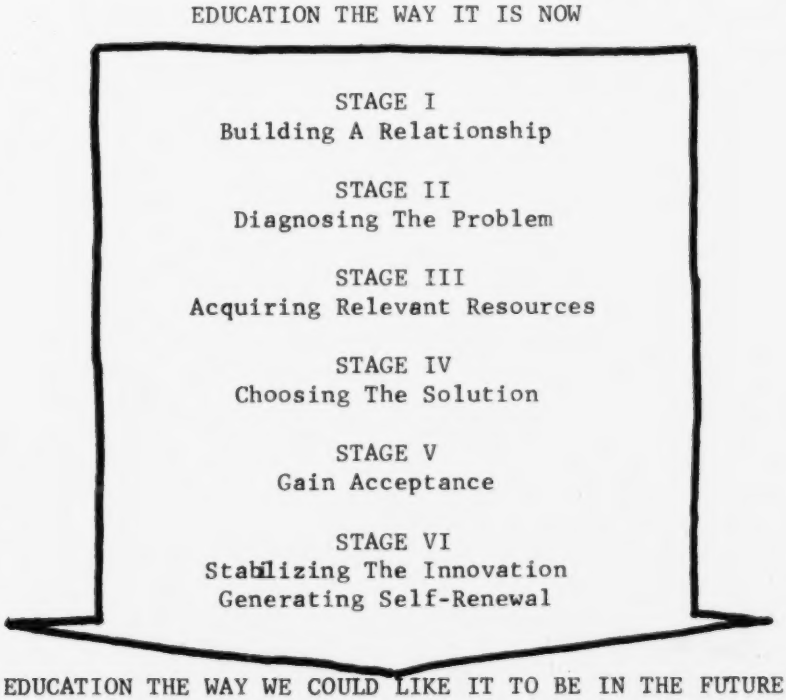

Figure 3 Change Agent As Process Helper*

*From Havelock - A Guide To Innovation In Education - Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge. Institute for Social Research. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1970, p. 10.

This model suggests that the role of the linking agent consists of three main components: (1) establishing and maintaining a relationship with the client (practitioner), (2) identifying and resolving the problem, and (3) integrating the problem solution in the client's system (school system).

Organization Development Model

The recent emergence of organization development as a process to resolve dysfunctions in an organization provided the second heuristic model.

Lawrence and Lorch (1969, pg. 89) provide a reconstruction of the process they used in developing organizations.

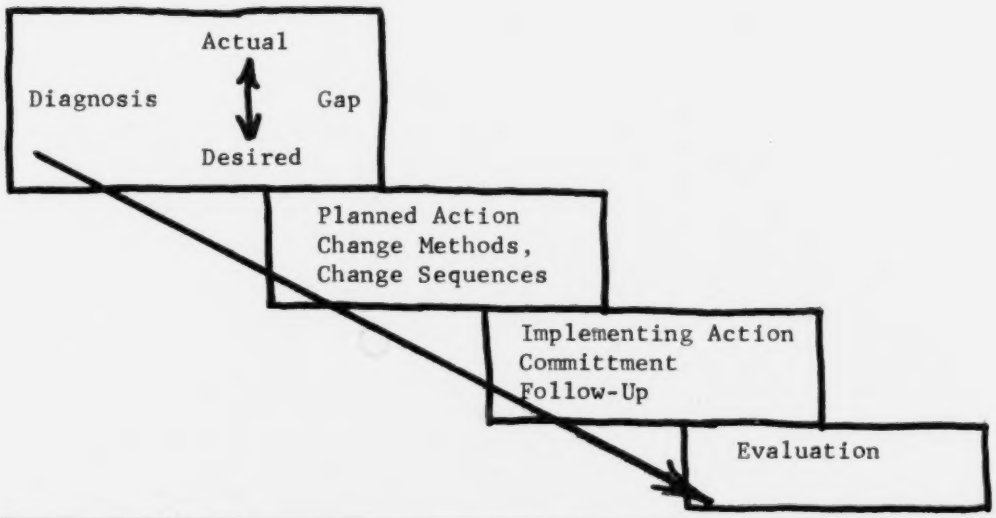

Figure 4 The Organizational-Change Process

This model suggests that the linking agent's role consists of the following major components: (1) collaborative diagnosis, (2) planning action to respond to dysfunctions, (3) assisting in the implementation of selected plans, and (4) assisting in evaluating the implemented plans.

The Implementation Model for the Three Projects

Although the change agent and organizational-change models (Figures 3 and 4) guided the writer in implementing the three projects, the actual process used emerged as the projects proceeded. Perhaps this was influenced by the assumption of a participant-consultant role which required a high degree of task productivity for two of the projects.

The role of the consultant has been characterized as "...a facilitator, helper, objective observer, and specialist in how to diagnose needs, how to identify resources, and how to retrieve from expert sources." (Havelock, 1971).

Usually, the consultant is not responsible for implementing action plans developed during the consultation process. In two of the projects (Compensatory and Process Evaluations) this responsibility was assumed by the consultant, and, therefore, the consultant became a participant in the organization.

In the administrative team project the responsibility for implementing action plans was assumed by the team members. Therefore, the participant-consultant role emphasized consultant-type behaviors with participant behaviors (task oriented) provided if requested by administrative teams.

Given the interstitial nature of the projects, the focus on problem resolution, and the emphasis on task productivity by the participant-consultant, the following model reconstructs the process employed. (See Figure 5).

Figure 5 depicts three crucial dimensions of the implementation process: (1) linkage relationships emphasis, (2) the sequence of process components, and (3) conflict management during the process stages. This reconstruction

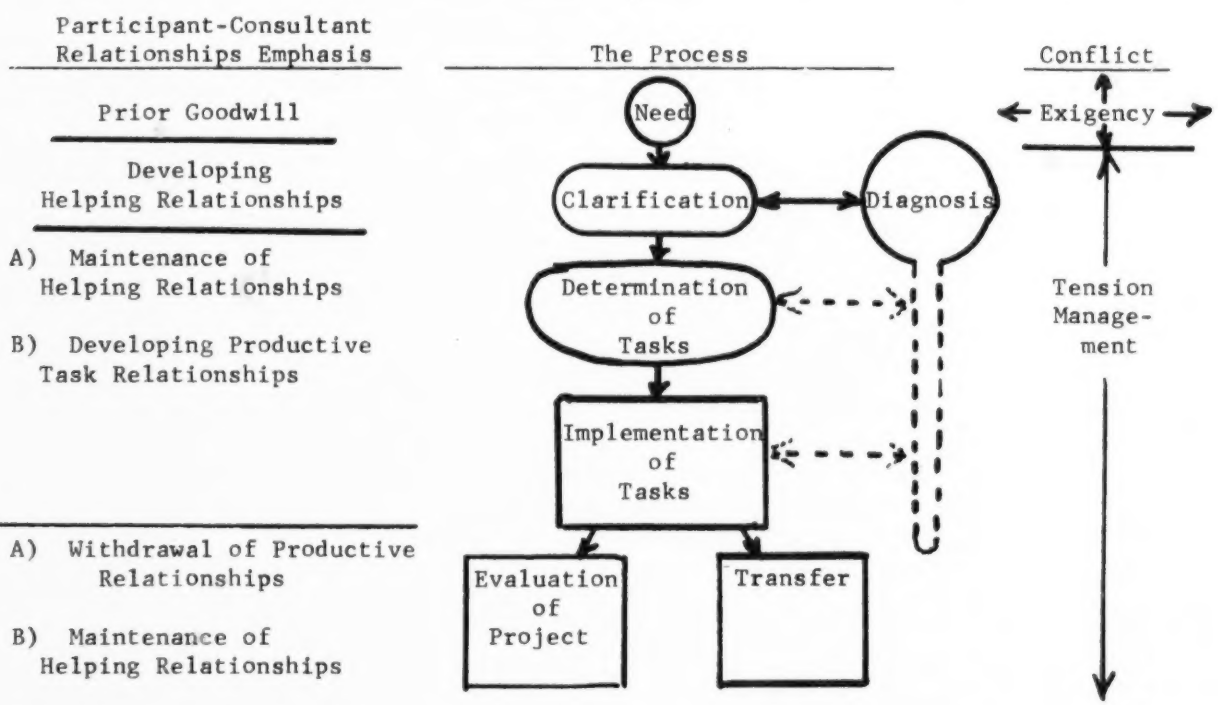

Figure 5 The Implementation Process For The Planning-Evaluation Projects

of implementation views the process as more than a simple implementation of specific tasks to be conducted for a project. The emphasis presented in the model views the implementation process with a macroscopic orientation. The specific tasks conducted for a project are dependent on the prior clarification of project objectives and understanding of the dynamics of the project's organizational setting.

The implementation process requires a mix of client and participant-consultant: Helping and productive. Finally, the responsibility of the linking agent to manage tensions generated by the implementation process. What follows is a brief description of each component and the nature of the

participant-consultant/client relationships. A subsequent section considers the management of tension.

Need

The need component represents a state of tension during which an exigency condition prevails. Things aren't the way they should be! Something has to be done, and a way to get it done is not known by the person experiencing the exigency. A primitive articulation of the problem occurs, and it is at this point that the initial contact with the linking agent occurs. Due to an accumulation of prior goodwill the linking agent is viewed as a potential source of help and is contacted.

Clarification-Diagnosis

Clarification and diagnosis are simultaneous interactive components. The clarification process focuses on the enumeration of the project's problems and the type of assistance desired. The diagnosis process focuses on obtaining an assessment of the organizational dynamics of the client's environment.

The clarification process is conducted jointly (agent/client) with the participant-consultant assuming the absence of a clear mission or format for the project. The diagnosis process is conducted covertly, except when explicitly enumerated as an element of the problem set.

The nature of the participant-consultant/client interactions is supportive and consists of in-depth questioning, focusing on the problems, desired services, and nature of working relationship desired.

Although the diagnosis is conducted covertly, the participant-consultant consciously seeks information regarding the organizational dynamics relating to the project. The clarification process ends with joint agreement (participant-consultant/client) on specific task objectives, whereas the diagnosis

continues, but at a semi-conscious level.

The methods used to collect information included direct observation, individual or group interviews, and questionnaires or survey instruments. Below are listed detailed elements of the clarification component and sample elements of the diagnosis component.

Clarification	Diagnosis
Phase I - Exploratory State	
1. Initial Problem(s) Enumeration	1. Site Visitations 2. Collection of Data via Observations and Interview of: a. group structure b. power structure c. communications patterns d. informal groups e. organization dysfunctions f. sources and nature of conflicts g. leadership behaviors h. etc.
2. Initial-Feasibility Estimate	
3. Nature of Desired Relationship	
4. Cost Estimates	
Phase II - Formal Committment	
1. Proposal Presentation	
2. Bargaining	
3. Formal Contract a. service to be provided b. cost c. rules of operation d. time frame	
Phase III - Problem(s) Clarification	
1. Clarification of Problems	
2. Feedback of Findings	
3. Reiteration of the Nature of the Relationship	
4. Enumeration of Specific Questions for each Problem - Jointly Accepted	

These components of the process are very time consuming because:

1. articulation of problems is a slow process.

2. the only way to get a feel for the organization is by direct extensive contact.

3. the development of helping supportive relationships occurs over time.

4. the acceptance of the participant-consultant by organizational members requires frequent personal contact.

Determination of Tasks

The determination of tasks component consists of two phases: (1) the consideration of possible tasks by the participant-consultant, and (2) the joint selection of tasks by the participant-consultant and the client.

Possible tasks are determined by the participant-consultant since it is his responsibility to perform them if accepted by the client. Alternative strategies are considered for each question and tempered by the amount of resources (human and physical) available.

Determining strategies is essentially a technical job in which the planning-evaluation competencies of the participant-consultant legitimatizes his assumption of this task. The second phase consists of presenting the strategies to the client and gaining his acceptance of the action plan.

During this phase of the implementation process, the nature of participant-consultant/client relationship begins to change. Emphasis on task oriented relationships develops and continues to increase through the next stage. Supportive helping relationships continue, but since the focus of activities becomes task oriented, the participant-consultant's behavior becomes more directive and formalistic (deadlines - collecting information - analysis).

Implementation of Tasks

The implementation of the tasks is straightforward and pragmatic. It occurred as follows:

1. Task Activities

   a. information collection

b. data analysis

c. reporting findings

2. Systematic feedback

3. Recycle until project termination

This phase of the implementation process results in a heavy emphasis of productive task behaviors and maintenance of supportive behaviors with the client. The task emphasis is self-evident. Supportive-helping relationships were emphasized during the feedback sessions - assistance in interpreting the findings, emphasis on the client as decision-maker, and the participant-consultant as information provider.

Evaluation-Transfer

The final components evaluation and transfer, occur simultaneously.

Evaluation:

The nature of the evaluation was generally informal and subjective (The administrative team project was formal and objective.). The evaluation focused on:

1. participant-consultant relationships

2. task productivity

3. procedures employed during the project.

Transfer:

The transfer component was also informal and not prescriptive. It included the following:

1. Possible use of information and skills for other problems.

2. Unfinished business.

3. Model of the process employed.

Information for these components was obtained and provided by both participant-consultant and client. Evaluative judgements were provided by the

client and transfer suggestions by the participant-consultant.

During this phase of the implementation process there was a rapid decline of productive relationships - contacts became less frequent - helping relationships were maintained.

In summary, a reconstruction of the implementation process which evolved during the three projects has been presented. Also, some description of the changing nature of the participant-consultant/client relationship was provided.

V Tension Management

Organizational Conflict

During the entire implementation process the participant-consultant assumed that conflict was endemic to organizations. This perspective is suggested by structuralist writers who "...recognize fully the organizational dilemma: the inevitable strains - which can be reduced but not eliminated - between organizational needs and personal needs; between rationality and non-rationality; between discipline and autonomy; between formal and informal relations· between management and workers, or, more generically, between ranks and divisions." (Etizioni, 1964, pg. 41).

A definition of conflict is provided by Boulding (1962, pg. 5) "...as a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the imcompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other."

Etizioni's statement suggests conflict is endemic and a fact of life in eomplex organizations. Boulding's definition suggests that levels of conflict

will vary depending on the behavioral positions of involved parties (individual - groups - organizations).

These assumptions thus provided the general orientation utilized by the participant-consultant to covertly seek an estimate of the conflict types and levels in project settings.

Conflict types and levels for each of the projects were:

A. Administrative Teams - the level of conflict varied from team to team with common conflict types of:

   1. Inter-instructional levels (elementary vs. secondary; secondary vs. central office)
   2. Organization and environment (school system vs. community power structures)
   3. Decision-marking conflicts (who had the right to make the decision?)
   4. Intra-personal (power motives of individuals)

B. Compensatory Evaluation - the level of conflict was the lowest of the three projects. In fact, harmony was the prevailing condition.

During the implementation process, two types of conflict developed and were quickly resolved:

   1. Inter-organizational - private firm and school system. The conflict developed over the fulfillment of contracted services.
   2. Intra-organizational - classroom teachers and learning center staffs. The conflict developed over disruption of normal classroom activities.

C. Flexible Modular Process Evaluation - the level of conflict was extremely high. This was perceived as due to the short operating time

(7 months) and the absence of "patterned relationships" and school traditions. Also, the innovations designed for the school made it an institutional deviant within the school system. The level of conflict reached crises stages frequently: for example, the closing of school over racial confrontations and threats of mass grievances by staff members. The types of conflict were:

1. Inter-personal (between teachers over teaching load, building location, and subject assignments.
2. Intra-personal (the newness of the course structures - teaming large - medium - and small groups. Individual teachers and difficulty coping with the non-traditional structure)
3. Inter-group (between subject area specialities) Administration - student groups.
4. Inter-organizations (the high schools in the district were competing for resources and student populations.
5. Organization - environment (community pressure for return to the traditional structure - staff uptightness over this issue.)

These are not exhaustive of the conflicts which existed but serve to indicate the types and level for each project. Although these conflict situations were not the main concern of the participant-consultant's tasks, they impinged upon and affected the implementation of the projects and selection of implementation strategies.

Optimal Stress

What occurred during the implementation of the projects were attempts

to maintain a condition of optimal stress (creative tension) during the various stages of the projects. Although there is little empirical research to support the existence of this condition, it is frequently cited in various fields of inquiry.

Boulding (1962, pg. 305) in discussing the practical implications of his general conflict theory states:

> In a given situation, we may have too much or too little conflict, or the amount may be just right. There is no simple operational definition of such an optimum; we must rely for our information on a complex structure of attitudes and evaluations.

In discussing the relationship between group task performance and tension level, Jacobs, (1970, pg. 66) states:

> There probably is an optimum degree of group tension for high group performance. Tension should not be much lower than this optimum value because then the group would not have the drive to accomplish task functions; nor should it be much higher because group members would then become concerned about and affected by the tension itself, and this would rapidly disrupt effective performance.

March and Simon, (1958, pg. 184) in considering the rate of organization change, indicate:

> There is another common hypothesis ... that innovation will be most rapid and vigorous when the "stress" on the organization is neither too high nor too low. By stress is meant the discrepancy between the level of aspiration and the level of achievement. According to this hypothesis, if achievement too easily exceeds aspiration, apathy results: if aspiration is very much above achievement, frustration or desperation result, with consequent sterotypy.

These statements consistently suggest that conflict (stress-tension) must be within tolerable limits in order to facilitate productive results.

Potential sources of tension were considered as each project proceeded through the implementation process. When particularly stressful activities were required, coping strategy was developed in order to obtain the necessary information without engendering excessive tension. The following are examples

of these strategies.

Administrative Teams

During the clarification phase, it was necessary to obtain an assessment of the problems and characteristics of each team. In order to stimulate honest expression and minimize hierarchical pressures on subordinates, a modified Delphi procedure was employed. The information was compiled by the participant-consultant and fed back to the teams.

Prior to providing the feedback, the participant-consultant reviewed the findings and found that one of the administrative teams had a particularly negative team profile (Degree of mutual trust, control methods, etc.). Extreme stress effects of this feedback were anticipated. The participant-consultant therefore joined this team during the feedback session - anticipating the need for crisis support by an "objective" party. The crisis occurred and passed.

Process Evaluation - Flexible Modular High School

During the implementation of tasks phase, computation of faculty loads was stymied by the absence of load standards, data element definitions, and valid faculty activity documents Since the typical consequences of quantifying a faculty member's activities is outright rejection, a representative faculty committee was formed to consider standards and to recommend data element definitions.

The committee labored for two months and came to a tentative agreement (subject to revision after the loads were computed). The collection of load data was conducted on a one-to-one basis (participant-consultant/staff members).

The loads were computed and fed back. The technique employed in this case

was to allow a representative faculty group, with the constraints of their negotiated contract as guidelines, the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process (co-optation).

When tension states were considered too low the employment of feedback devices generally increased the tension level of target groups.

Administrative Teams

During the implementation of tasks phase, some administrative teams were not resolving their difficulties. Teams were matched on the basis of level of team development progress (one high - one low) and requested to provide one another with progress reports of team activities. Also, an individual assessment of the teams' progress was conducted using a modified Delphi technique. Dissatisfied members of low development teams were given an opportunity to express their dissatisfaction, and they did. Up went the tension level in the team.

Compensatory Education

During the implementation of tasks phase, a parent opinion questionnaire containing two open-ended questions was sent to parent. A compilation of verbatum responses was fed back to the building principals, and their level of tension went up. The parents provided criticism, information, and suggestions which after a period of time was viewed as constructive criticism by the building principals.

In summary, attempts were made to anticipate and develop strategies to cope with excessive (or potentially excessive) and minimal tension states. The vast majority of strategies were tension reducing in that the conflict milieu of two of the projects was permeated with multiple conflict situations and high tension level.

V Implications

This paper has presented a description of the implementation process which emerged while conducting three planning-evaluation projects emphasizing a symbiotic mechanism.

A recurrent theme emerged from these experiences: The management of organizational conflict was crucial to the implementation of new planning-evaluation strategies.

The initial stimulus for seeking implementation assistance was due to the level of tension (excessive) developing within an organizational setting.

The implementation process which emerged was the result of attempts to manage tensions as the projects developed.

The strategies selected during implementation were conditioned by the conflict conditions (types and level) within the organization and potential conflict effects (escalating - decreasing) of the techniques employed (Feedback-Delphi-Confrontation).

The behavior postures assumed by the participant-consultant were designed to minimize tension producing differentials which could endanger the implementation of the projects.

Although it was not the mission of this paper to consider implications of these findings, school systems might consider using symbiotic relationships under the following conditions.

1. Lack of skilled planning evaluation personnel within the school system.
2. Conditions of internal strife and conflict requiring a third party for implementation of planning-evaluation projects.

3. The desire for demonstration projects under conditions of organizational stress and limited resources.

If school systems desire symbiotic relationships, the implementation model presented in this paper might be employed to plan and evaluate the relationship.

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